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CLAIMS:

1. A primer casing comprising a sleeve portion and a leading portion, wherein the sleeve portion is adapted to receive a primer and comprises a blasthole engagement means, and wherein the leading portion comprises a nose cone which is provided at one end and as an extension of the sleeve portion.
2. A casing according to claim 1, wherein the primer is in the form of a cylindrical cartridge.
3. A casing according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the sleeve portion defines a cylindrical passage into which the primer may be slidably inserted.
4. A casing according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the primer casing further comprises a primer retaining means.
5. A casing according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the apex of the nose cone is rounded.
6. A casing according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the blasthole engagement means comprises a projection from the sleeve portion.
7. A casing according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the blasthole engagement means is moveable between a retracted position and a blasthole engagement position.
8. A casing according to claim 7, wherein the blasthole engagement means is integral with the casing and attached thereto by a flexible hinge which enables movement between retracted and blasthole engagement positions.
9. A casing according to claim 7 or 8, wherein in the retracted position the blasthole engagement means abuts the sleeve portion.
10. A casing according to any one of claims 6 to 9, wherein in the blasthole engagement position the projection is inclined outwardly relative to the primer

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casing and rearwardly relative to the leading portion.

11. A casing according to any one of claims 6 to 10, wherein the projection comprises at its end a blasthole wall engagement means.
12. A casing according to any one of the preceding claims, further comprising a loading hose engaging means.
13. A casing according to claim 12, wherein the sleeve portion is adapted to engage the end of a loading hose.
14. A casing according to claim 13, wherein the sleeve portion adapted to engage the end of the loading hose has an internal dimension greater than the external dimension of the end of the loading hose.
15. A casing according to claim 13 or 14, further comprising means for preventing contact between the primer and loading hose when the loading hose is engaged by the sleeve portion.
16. A casing according to any one of the preceding claims, comprising a number of apertures in the sleeve portion.
17. A method of loading a blasthole, which method comprises inserting a primer into a primer casing as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 16 and positioning the primer casing at a desired location in the blasthole.
18. A method according to claim 17, wherein the primer casing is positioned using a loading hose.
19. A method according to claim 17 or 18, further comprising charging the blasthole with bulk explosive.
20. A primer casing substantially as hereinbefore described.
21. A method of loading a blasthole substantially as hereinbefore described.

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22. The steps and features disclosed herein or referred to or indicated in the specification and/or claims of this application, individually, collectively, and any and all combinations of any two or more of said steps or features.

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